THE EXCHANGE AT ANTWERP.

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The commerce of Antwerp had been gradually increasing during the 14th and 15th centuries, and when in 1482, the quarrel between the people of Bruges and the Archduke Maximilian induced that ruler to blockade Sluys, the trade of the city of Bruges began sensibly to decline, and that of Antwerp to increase, until the latter became the great centre of European commerce. All nations traded there, and at one period, it is said, that 2,500 vessels have anchored in the Scheldt opposite this city at one time. The English merchants traded here considerably, and the house devoted to their use is still pointed out close to the Hotel de Ville. The public buildings of Antwerp shew the wealth and taste of its traders in the days of its prosperity, and sadly contrast with its present decline, which dates from the devastation of the city in 1585, by the Duke of Parma, when the Scheldt was blockaded, a restriction upon its trade never removed until 1794.

The Exchange was constructed in 1531, for the use of the merchantmen. It is in the form of an open square, with an arcade all round, and has a richly groined roof, the pillars which support it elaborately carved, each one in a different manner. A tower, containing a clock and bells, is on one side. It is an interesting pile, inasmuch as it is the earliest building of the kind, and gave the idea to our own Sir Thomas Gresham, for the construction of a similar edifice in London. Any one who examines a view of Gresham's Exchange, will see how closely he followed that at Antwerp in its construction. Before this, our traders met in the open streets in all weathers "and were content to walk about in the rain more like pedlars than merchants," until the private munificence of Gresham gave them a proper place to meet in, the ground only being given by the citizens. F. W. F.

*** At p. 51 *ante*, will be found an engraving of an interesting stone staircase of the Gothic period, adjoining the Antwerp *Bourse*, now represented, together with a short notice of the place. Some further remarks on Antwerp, with an engraving of carved woodwork in Antwerp Cathedral, will be found in Vol. IV., p. 534. In the accompanying engraving of the Bourse of Antwerp, the columns, which are very slight, are made to appear somewhat stouter than they are in reality.

DRAINAGE OF MANCHESTER.

CHEAP SEWERS.

Mr. Francis, who has been engaged as surveyor for the paving and sewerage of the township of Manchester for upwards of twelve years, says, that during that period they have paved and sewered about 600 streets. He writes to us as follows:—"I believe our system of sewerage was found, by the sanatory commission, to be at least as effective and economical as any they had met with. In reading the reports of evidence given before the sanatory commission, I was most struck by that of Mr. Dyce Guthrie. His suggestion of the use of tubes or pipes of burnt clay for drains and sewers, appeared to me highly worthy of consideration; but I found that his idea of forming sewers in three pieces was impracticable at least with any material found in this neighbourhood, because the sections would warp out of shape in burning, and therefore could not be put together to form a perfect tube. I recommended the use of 6-inch and 9-inch pipes for private and surface drains two years ago. The committee adopted the suggestion, and we have used them ever since with perfect success, and thereby effected a saving in that item of forty per cent.

It was in January last, that the idea of the syphon trap occurred to me; and I claim it as my invention, so far as the adaptation of an old principle in a new material and to a new purpose may be called a new invention. Our trap is a tube of fire-brick material, the sides 1½ inch thick, with a horizontal aperture a foot square at one end, and a vertical aperture of an oval shape at the other end: over the square end is built an eye of brickwork, covered by a channel grid, forming what you call, I believe, a "gully hole." We have laid down about a score of these, and find them completely effective: they save us a pound in each case. The trap we used before was a kind of iron pan, with a cross piece dipping into the water.

Immediately after this, being so far well satisfied with the introduction of the fire-brick material into our sewerage, I again took up the idea of making *main sewers* of the same material, and the conclusion I came to, was, that the thing was only practicable by having entire tubes formed of equal lengths, the egg-shape to be universally adopted, and the sizes to graduate from 6 inches (taking the smaller diameter) upwards to the largest that could be made. The sewer being laid in lengths of

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